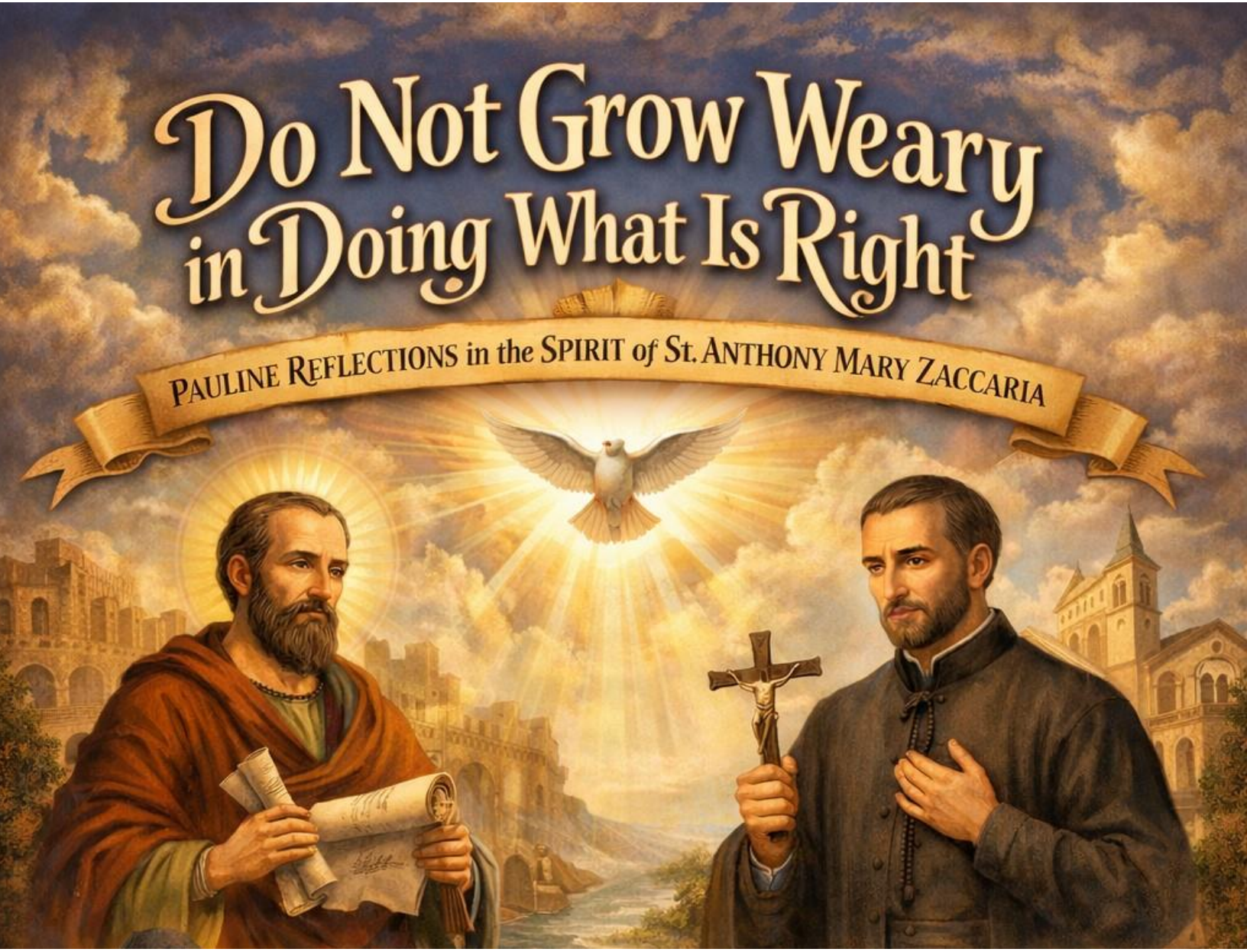

"But as for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good."

(A reflection based on 2 Thessalonians 3:10–13)

BIBLICAL CONTEXT: The weariness of the upright

Saint Paul, in his Letter to the Thessalonians, addresses a very down-to-earth yet painful problem within the community: injustice. The Apostle observes people who are living "in a disorderly way" — not working, taking advantage of others, and causing confusion.

In such an environment, a natural temptation arises in the hearts of honest and zealous people: cynicism and discouragement. When we see that others do not respect the rules, that our efforts are being exploited, and that the "clever ones" seem to have an easier life, a thought appears in our hearts: *"Why should I keep trying? If they don't have to, then I'll give up too."*

It is precisely at this moment that Saint Paul speaks his key sentence: **"But as for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good."** The Greek word used here (*ekkakeō*) literally means: "do not give in to evil," "do not lose heart," "do not become weak within." Paul is telling us: do not allow the mediocrity of others to

destroy your own nobility. Your point of reference is not the behavior of a lazy neighbor, but Christ Himself.

THE TEACHING OF SAINT ANTHONY M. ZACCARIA

(based on Barnabite spirituality and materials from www.antonizaccaria.eu)

Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria (1502–1539), founder of the Barnabites, was called the "Apostle of Paul." His teaching fits this passage perfectly, because throughout his life he fought against the greatest enemy of "doing good" — lukewarmness.

On pages devoted to his spirituality (antonizaccaria.eu), a key idea emerges as the remedy for discouragement: **constant growth**.

Saint Anthony wrote to his spiritual children words that resonate deeply with the exhortation from Thessalonica:

"I desired to see you constantly growing in perfection. Therefore, it was like a dagger thrust into my heart when I happened to learn [that you had become lukewarm]…"

Zaccaria teaches us that in the spiritual life, there is no standing still. "Not growing weary" does not mean merely remaining where we are, but continually moving forward.

The Struggle Against Lukewarmness: According to Saint Anthony, discouragement begins when we stop striving for "great perfection." If we settle for the minimum — only what is strictly necessary — we soon become like those whom Saint Paul rebukes: people "busy with what is not their concern."

HOLY MADNESS FOR CHRIST:

On the aforementioned website, the attitude of "holy madness" is frequently recalled. In order not to grow weary in doing good in a world full of selfishness, we need a zeal that appears foolish in the eyes of the world. Only by gazing upon the Crucified One (the very center of Zaccaria's spirituality) can we find the strength to work when others rest, and to serve when others demand to be served.

PASTORAL CONCLUSIONS: How can we live this word today?

By combining Saint Paul's exhortation with the fire of Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria, we can draw three practical guidelines for our lives:

Separate your heart from the behavior of others.

The fact that someone around you (at work or in your family) is lazy or demanding does not release you from the call to be a "person of order." Your diligence and goodness are meant to be a witness, not a reaction to applause or gratitude.

The remedy for discouragement is "more," not "less."

When you feel burned out from doing good, Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria would advise not an escape into minimalism, but a renewal of original zeal. Paradoxically, we grow less tired when we do something with great love for God than when we do it reluctantly, while complaining about others.

WORK AS A PATH TO HOLINESS.

Paul commands us to work "quietly." Work is not a punishment, but a way of preserving dignity and avoiding "things that are unnecessary" (gossip, intrigue, emptiness). Faithfully fulfilling our duties — even when no one sees — is a powerful form of prayer.

CONCLUSION

May the sight of another person's weakness never become an excuse for our own mediocrity. As Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria teaches us*: let us run toward God like madmen*, without looking back at those who choose to stand still.✠

Series 1: ***Do Not Grow Weary in Doing What Is Right***
Pauline Reflections in the Spirit of St Anthony Maria Zaccaria

By Barnabite Publications